Wintry weekend in store

2 February 2012 - This weekend will see a marked change in the weather as the dry spell makes way for snow and ice for many parts.

Over the past few days we have seen the coldest spell of the winter so far, as very cold air has flooded across the UK from the continent. Temperatures have dropped as low as -9.4 °C in Shap, Cumbria, and -10 °C is possible in places tonight.

Snow showers are expected along parts of the eastern coastline today and tomorrow, but most places will continue to see bright, dry and cold conditions.

Things are set to change as we go through into Saturday, however, as an Atlantic front moves in from the west.

Paul Gundersen, Deputy Chief Forecaster at the Met Office, said: "As this front moves in from the west it will come up against cold air and we're likely to see a mixture of rain, sleet and snow across the UK.

"It's a finely balanced situation, so there is some uncertainty about which areas will see the most significant snowfall, but at the moment the risk is highest in central and eastern areas where we could see up to 5-10cm of snow.

"With this risk of snow and ice over the next few days it is important people stay up to date with our weather forecasts and warnings for the latest information."

Later on Saturday it is likely that northern and western parts of the UK will see slightly less cold conditions take over, with rain more likely than snow. However, with the rain falling on cold ground there is a widespread ice risk.

Thereafter this east/west split is likely to continue, with the south and east remaining cold with ice and freezing fog likely. The north and west should be milder.

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Last updated: 5 April 2012